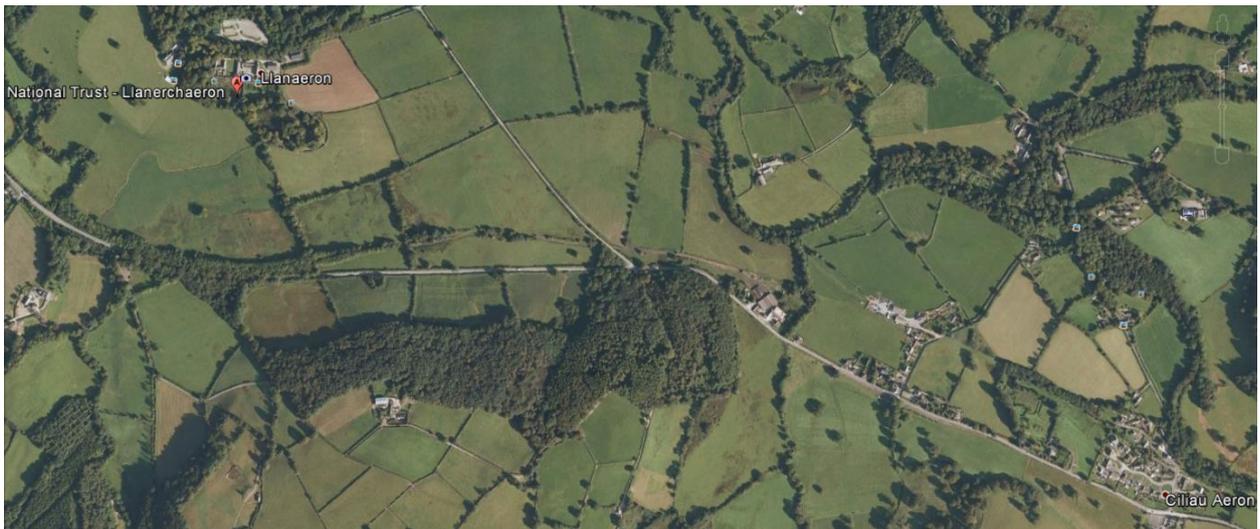


A Feasibility study into the creation of a community cycle trail from Ciliau-Aeron to the National Trust property of Llanerchaeron



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1. Summary

The Dyffryn Aeron Community Cycle Group formed in the summer of 2014 to create a safe cycle and walking route to link Ciliau Aeron school and the wider community with Llanerchaeron, Ty-Glyn walled garden and ultimately the coastal town of Aberaeron.

The group identified a need for this route after several meetings in 2015, gaining support from the local council, Ciliau-Aeron school, village hall committee and a host of locals. A letter of support was received from Dyffryn Aeron School and its pupils, also an agreement was signed by the potentially affected landowners to conduct surveys across their land to determine the viability of this project. After receiving 'Cynnal y Cardi' support (administered by Ceredigion County Council) under the LEADER scheme which is supported through Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government; West Wales Trails were commissioned to produce a feasibility study in June 2016.

Report Findings

- A traffic-free, primarily off-road, cycle route between the village of Ciliau Aeron and the National Trust property of Llanerchaeron would enable residents of Ciliau Aeron and Aberaeron to travel safely between the two population hubs.
- The new cycle track will create a 5 mile route from Ciliau Aeron to Aberaeron. If fully recognised by Sustrans, it will feature on the National Cycle Network and gain deserved recognition and credibility. The original length of 'route 822' will be doubled and over 95% of it off-road.
- The new cycle route should be designed and constructed adhering carefully to the standards set by the latest Sustrans and industry standards. This will ensure that the trail would be considered for inclusion in the National Cycle Network (NCN).
- The safeness of a journey can be immediately effected with the provision of a cycle route. Other elements can also benefit just as promptly alongside, namely the touristic appeal and the local economy.
- The cycle route would significantly reduce parents' perception of traffic, allowing more children to cycle or walk to school.
- An easily accessible traffic-free cycle route will hopefully appeal to anyone who makes the commute along the main road by car (Ciliau Aeron to Aberaeron)
- The new cycle route will serve to be a health initiative accessible to all, through actual use of the route and in encouraging cycling elsewhere, for example mountain biking at trail centres.

- Routes like this have been proven to reduce road usage, improve social cohesion (joining communities), increase childhood fitness and lower obesity, increase cycling club memberships, promote local school cycling and fitness projects.¹
- As cycle route users will use local businesses, there is greater likelihood that the money they spend will stay in the local economy.
- Visiting cyclists can help to support rural businesses such as cafés, village shops or post offices and pubs as well as generating greater trade.

¹ Sustrans Review 2014

2. Background

Ciliau-Aeron is a small village on the left bank of the river Aeron that straddles the A482. Amenities and facilities include a primary school, vets practice, breakers yard and numerous self-catering cottages and B&Bs. The village and its outlying areas have a considerable population of 1,974².

The coastal town of Aberaeron is home to the headquarters of Ceredigion County Council and features many local services and business that the local area demands. Its population is a gradually decreasing 1,422¹.

Ciliau Aeron is the next closest population hub to Aberaeron if travelling eastwards along the A482. The A482 is a particularly intimidating main road with no footpaths or lanes for safe walking and cycling options. The Llanerchaeron National Trust site lies no more than 2 miles west of Ciliau Aeron along the A482.

Existing cycle route

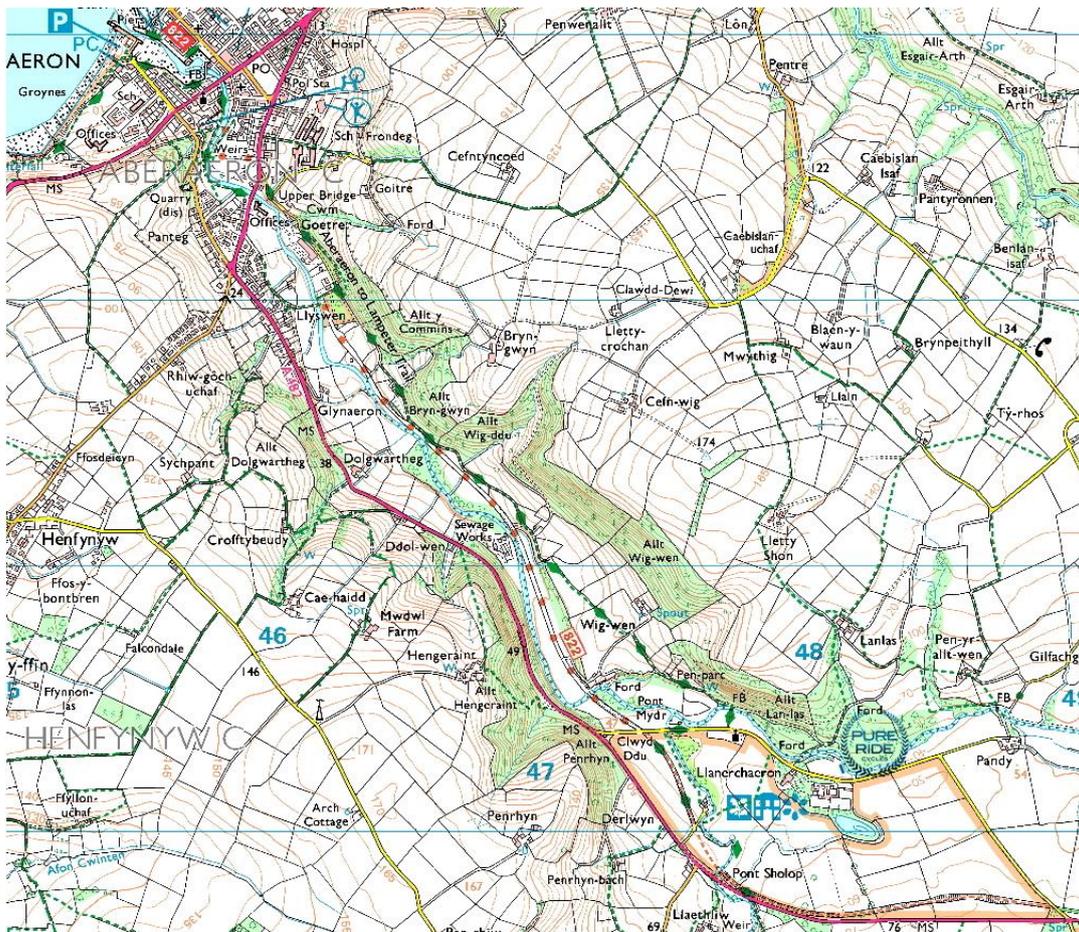


Fig.1 Current Cycle trail from Llanerchaeron to Aberaeron (The 822)

As is typical all over the UK, a refurbished disused railway line provides an off-road cycle route of 2.5 miles officially known as 'Sustrans Route 822', from Llanerchaeron National Trust site to Aberaeron town. This has been hailed a great success in generating more visitors to Llanerchaeron and providing a much used leisure facility for dog walkers, family walking groups and cyclists, both local and visiting. "Since the trains departed in the 1960s the embankments and cuttings have become a green corridor for wildlife and people. The route connects a variety of habitats, passing banks of wildflowers, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, ponds and streams." ³

Existing permissive paths

Another existing path within the area is a National Walking Route known as the 'Aeron Valley Trail'. This 21 mile route links Lampeter with Aberaeron, passing through the southern edge of Ciliau Aeron. It is a particularly scenic route following footpaths and minor roads, taking in a section of the Aeron River, passing through woodlands and agricultural fields. Its indirect nature makes it truly only a route for leisure walkers and the surface is unsuitable for cyclists.



Fig.2 Aeron Valley walking trail (re-produced with permission from Ceredigion County Council)

³ Sustrans cycle charity website

Cycling Initiatives

Trails for Wales is the rallying cry from the UK's leading cycle bodies as they respond to the Welsh Government's consultation "Improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation". This called for open access to the rights of way network, as enjoyed by Scotland.

The initiative came about after a public consultation identified a need for safe cycle routes and also change permissions on footpaths and permissive paths to allow cyclists to use them. Over the past two years momentum has been building, bringing the need for projects like the Ciliau Aeron trail into the public domain. This has been aided in recent months by Cycling celebrity and keen Mountain Biker Chris Boardman publicly supporting the campaign and raising its profile in the national media.

The campaign hopes to follow in the footsteps of the greater access rights that have existed in Scotland since 2003. Increased mountain bike and cycling access benefits the Scottish economy by £46.5 million a year, with indirect expenditure of up to £119 million, and generates over 1,300 jobs.⁴

"The Welsh Government has confirmed they've heard the off-road community's call for increased responsible access, which proves what can happen when cyclists come together for a common cause."

"It's too soon to celebrate at such an early stage in the consultation process, but CTC is confident we can achieve our collective goal of opening Trails for Wales for everyone's enjoyment."

"Increased off-road access to rural Wales would give a healthy boost to the economy," say CTC (Now re-branded as Cycling UK) and Open MTB.⁵

British Cycling Achievements

Over the last 10 years cycling has become the fastest growing sport in the UK, with every discipline of the sport growing, from Road Racing to Cyclocross, Downhill Mountain Biking to Cross Country⁶. The massive success of the British cycling team and individuals both at home and abroad during the past decade have increased the take up of the sport and boosted cycle sales. The addition of mountain biking and bmx'ing in the Olympics since 2008 and 2012 respectively, has further pushed cycling competition of all genres into the mainstream with notable increases in media coverage and sales.

Over the last few years there have been 3 winners of 'BBC Sports Personality of the Year' from the cycling world. Five Welsh Riders have been confirmed for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games - Elinor Barker, Ciara Horne, Owain Doull, Becky James and Geraint Thomas will compete on the road and track, Wales' largest representation of cyclists at an Olympic Games.⁷

4 CyclingUK Cycling review May 2015

5 CyclingUK Trails for Wales Campaigner, Gwenda Owen

6 CyclingUK Cycling review May 2015

7 Sport Wales - 'Warm up to Rio' web article May 2016

Investment in professional cycling has paid off – clearly shown by Bradley Wiggins’ win at the Tour de France and multiple medals for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympics - now we need much more funding to make cycling appealing to everyone.⁸

Mountain biking

Wales has become somewhat of a 'Mecca' for Mountain biking over the last two decades with the first 'Trail centre' opening in 1997 at the Forestry Commission site of Coed y Brenin, on the edge of Snowdonia National Park. Since then, mountain biking and the trail centre trend has snowballed and is still growing strong.

Forestry Commission Wales (NRW) enjoyed 293,146 visitors at their trail centres and mountain biking bases in 2011. This figure is growing each year as the popularity of the sport increases. Three of the centres on the map are privately owned, Coed Llandegla nr Wrexham (owned by UPM and managed by Tillhill) benefitted from over 200,000 visitors alone in 2014.



Fig. 3 Map of Welsh Mountain Biking Trail Centres & Bases (re-produced with permission from NRW)

As seen on the map, Nant yr Arian is the closest mountain biking facility to Ciliau Aeron, with new works on the trails carried out in Spring 2016. It enjoys 125,000⁹ per year with visitors from all over the UK and abroad.

This figure does not separate cycling specific visitor numbers from visitors to the Forest Park, NRW estimate that the cycling users at Forest parks amount to approx 45% of visitor numbers.¹⁰

8 LATC investigation into cycling in London 2012 - submission from Sustrans

9 The Tourism Company, VW, attractions

¹⁰ MBWales, Cycling in Wales for business report: cyclists-wales-business-eng.pdf

3. Proposal

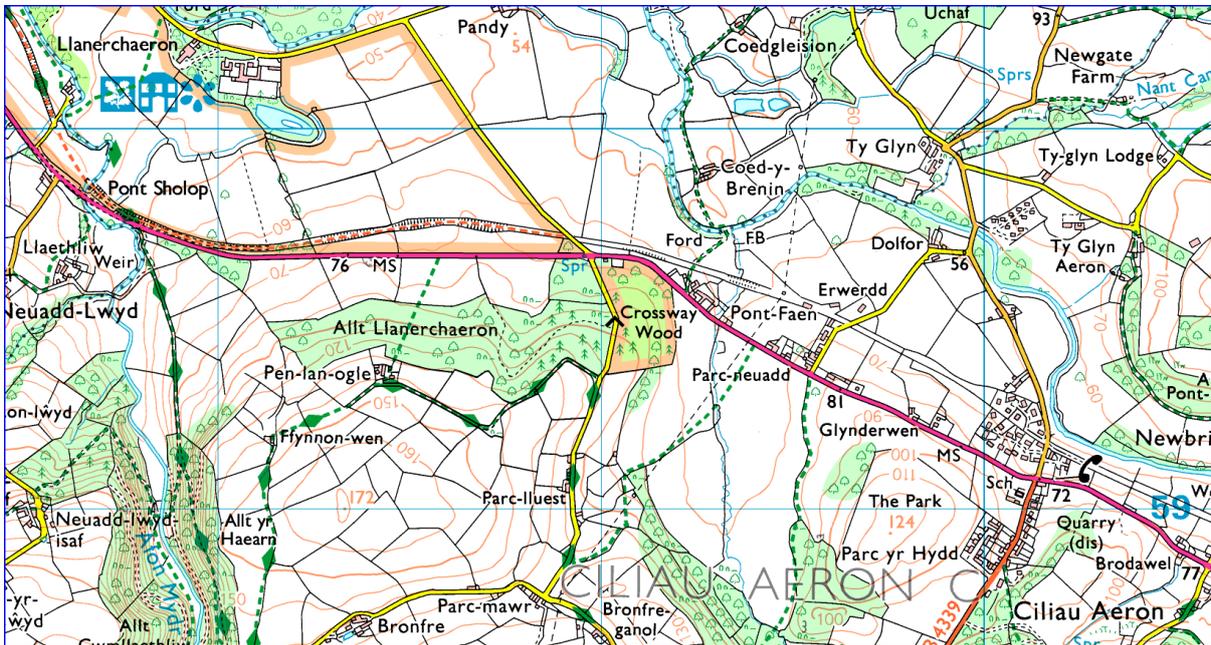


Fig 4. Map showing Ciliau Aeron and Llanerchaeron (reproduced under license from Anquet mapping)

To create a traffic-free, primarily off-road, cycle route between the village of Ciliau Aeron and the National Trust property of Llanerchaeron. The route is primarily for the residents of Ciliau Aeron and Aberaeron to enable a safe route between the two population hubs.

The Dyffryn Aeron Community Cycle action group believe the trail should be safe, accessible to cyclists, families and disabled users. The track should be sympathetic to its surroundings (avoiding Tarmac if possible), offer a sensory experience in the ancient woodland and on the banks of the Aeron River, plus be of benefit to commuters, leisure users and tourists.

The Proposed Route

The Proposed Route was surveyed and the points of note have been numbered and explained below:

1. The cycle route starts along a narrow lane off of the busy A482.
2. The proposed start of the off road cycle route follows through the field belonging to Sam & Rachel Holden at Maesyfelin. Their house is now on the market and thus would be very difficult to negotiate permissions for a new track to pass so closely to the house.
3. To point no.4. This stretch of river bank and woodland is owned by Jack Cockburn and is unused, this would add a scenic aspect to the route by following the Aeron river. The river is prone to flooding, there are active badger sets and the woodland is very narrow for some sections. Therefore parts of this would need to be constructed with a raised wooden boardwalk (potentially 260m at worst case) which could be prohibitively expensive.

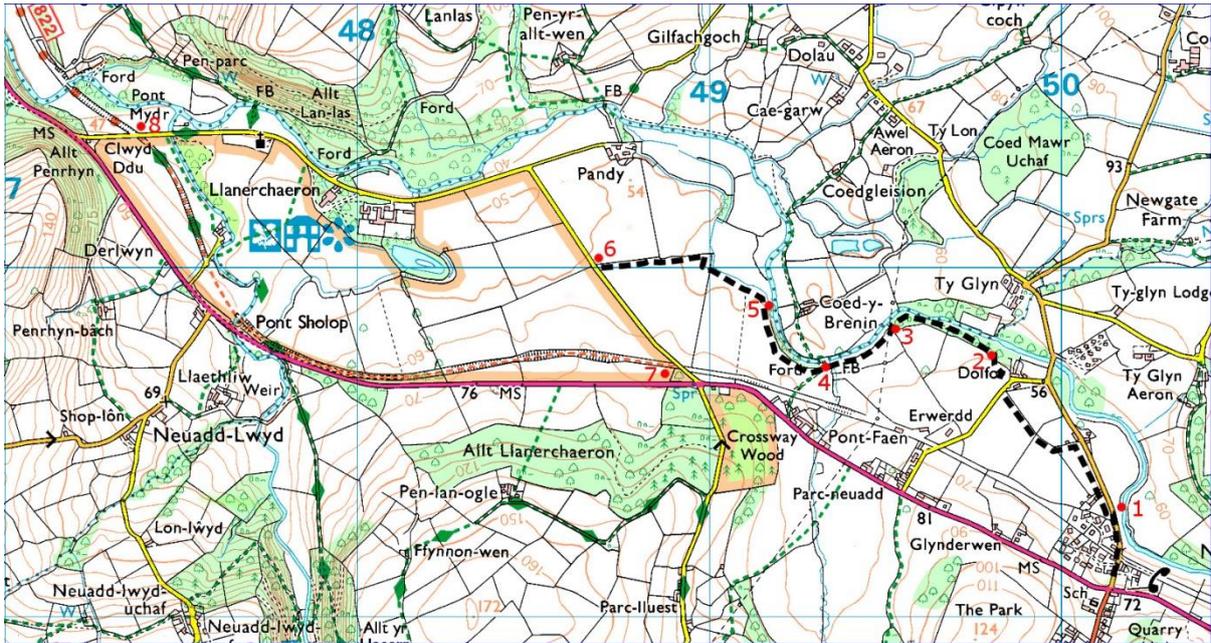


Fig 5. Original proposed route annotated (reproduced under license from Anquet mapping)

4. See above.
5. To point no.6. along River's edge, following (along the edge of the field); if the river's edge trees and growth is managed this could be a very scenic section.
6. See above.
7. The end of the new trail exits onto the road 400m North of the proposed National Trust trail extension at point 7.
8. Proposed National Trust trail extension along disused railway line.
9. Proposed National Trust trail extension along disused railway line and start of current route 822 to Aberaeron.

Further to discussions with Paul Boland (based at Llanerchaeron - National Trust General Manager Mid & SE Wales Coast & Countryside), the plans to build the Llanerchaeron extension to the cycle track have been reinvigorated by this cycle project and "is likely to happen within a similar timeframe". The tenant farmer on the National Trust land uses this section of the disused railway line to drive cattle, so provision for agricultural crossing points would have to be considered.

4. Infrastructure, Social & Economic Benefits

Improving cycle provision for local people encourages cycle tourism and is a clear justification for investment. The safeness of a journey (i.e. Ciliau Aeron to Aberaeron) is at the forefront and can be immediately effected with the provision of a cycle route. Other elements can also benefit just as promptly alongside, namely the touristic appeal and the local economy.

The National Cycle Network spans the length and breadth of the country, connecting every major town and city in the UK. Sustrans 'Route 822' from Llanerchaeron to Aberaeron, combined with the proposed route through National Trust land (currently a permissive path) and the new cycle track will create a 5 mile route from Ciliau Aeron to Aberaeron. If fully recognised by Sustrans, it will feature on the National Cycle Network and gain deserved recognition and credibility. The original length of 'route 822' will be doubled and over 95% of it off-road.

"Route 822 is still under development and much of it is only proposed. Currently only the section between Aberaeron and the National Trust property at Llanerchaeron along an old railway path is open"¹¹

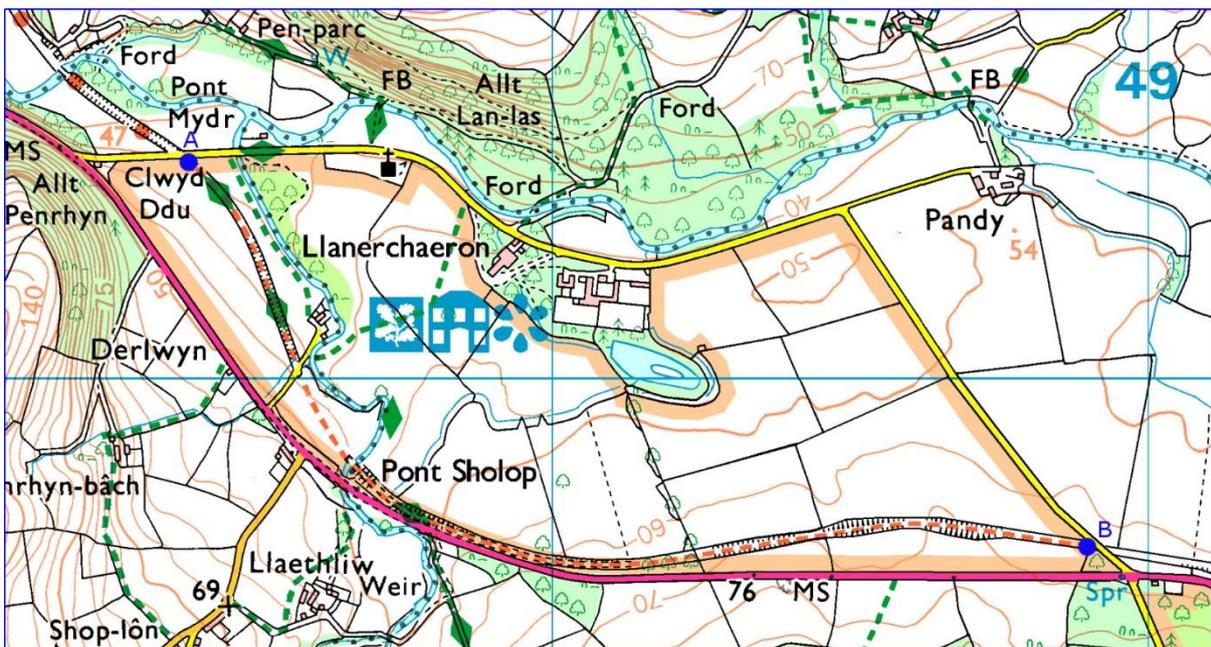


Fig. 6 The proposed route of the Llanerchaeron extension track will follow the current permissive path (A-B on the map)

¹¹ Excerpt from write-up of Route 822 on Sustrans.org.uk

Getting to School

According to Sustrans, the average primary school journey is just 1.5 miles and 1 in 5 cars during the morning peak time are doing the school run. It is unclear how many families the new route could serve in terms of getting children to school but it is hoped that the overall increase in cycling within the school will only encourage all children to do more cycling. In order to further improve numbers cycling to the primary school, the river bridge¹² would ideally be reinstated.

The cycle route would significantly reduce parents' perception of traffic, allowing more children to cycle or walk to school. An informal estimate suggested that in 2013 c30% of all sales were children's bikes.¹³ Yet nearly half of children surveyed by Sustrans in 2010 wanted to cycle to school but only 4% were allowed to. Teachers find that those pupils who don't arrive by car are more alert and ready to start the day. The children benefit in developing road safety skills and learning to manage risk gradually. They learn about their local area, develop wider social networks and gain independence.

One of the main incentives for the proposal of the cycle route is to provide secondary school age children with a safe journey from their home to Aberaeron Comprehensive School. By avoiding the fast, main road, parents will feel confident that the journey on the cycle route can be made alone and with significantly less risk. Children can also enjoy the social networking of cycling with friends.

The health benefits of cycling are manifold but specifically improving children's health is crucial for a sustainable future. In 2013, almost a third of children aged 2-15 were classed as either overweight or obese. The new cycle route will serve to be a health initiative accessible to all, through actual use of the route and in encouraging cycling elsewhere, for example mountain biking at trail centres. Boys aged 10-16 who cycle regularly to school are 30% more likely to meet recommended fitness levels, while girls who cycle are 7 times more likely to do so.

Getting to Work

The following statistics highlight the need for more cycle routes as a safe way for people to travel.

- *The number of cyclists seriously injured or killed on roads in Wales rose by 38 per cent from 2013 to 2014.*¹⁴
- *According to the Welsh Government statistics, there were 100 cyclists killed or seriously injured in Wales during 2013 and 138 in 2014.*¹⁵
- *Ten years ago, the annual average for cyclists killed or injured on Welsh roads was 70 (2004-2008), a rise of 98 per cent.*¹⁶
- *In Ceredigion, 22% of cyclists killed or seriously injured in Ceredigion are children under 16.*¹⁷

¹² Appendix 9

¹³ European Bicycle Industry and Market Profile 2013 (Coliped/Colibi)

¹⁴ Police recorded road casualties in Wales, 2014 (SDR 87/2015 - 4/6/2015)

¹⁵ Police recorded road casualties in Wales, 2014 (SDR 87/2015 - 4/6/2015)

¹⁶ Pedal Cyclist Casualties, Wales, 2014 9/7/15

¹⁷ Pedal Cyclist Casualties, Wales, 2014 9/7/15

Cycling per se appears to be gaining more popularity year on year. In 2014, around 3.63 million cycles were sold in Britain in 2014, roughly 8% more than in 2013¹⁸. According to the *Department for Transport's vehicles statistics*, 2.43 million cars were registered for the first time in Great Britain in 2014. This means that over a million more bikes were sold than there were new cars registered. In this sense and similarly to the school children wishing to ride to school, one could question how many would like to ride their bike more, either to work or to visit friends, but feel the journey isn't safe enough.

Although the population sizes of Aberaeron and Ciliau Aeron are very similar, Aberaeron will receive the majority of commuters. An easily accessible traffic-free cycle route will hopefully appeal to anyone who makes the commute along the main road by car. Likely, employers will experience something similar to school teachers - staff are more alert and ready for work. Researchers for Sustrans have estimated that the network of cyclepaths and walkways have helped save businesses £200 million by decreasing the amount of sick days taken due to poor lifestyle. According to Cycling UK review May 2015, on average, regular cycle commuters take more than one day per year less off sick than colleagues who do not cycle to work. People who don't cycle-commute regularly have a 39% higher mortality rate than those who do.

In the hope that there will be fewer road users on the A482, the road also becomes safer and less busy for those having to make journeys to Aberaeron by car. Congestion in Aberaeron at peak times will be reduced and there will be less parking pressures, either in car parks or on-street parking. The overall risk of making a journey by car, foot or bike will be lessened.

Other contributing factors include a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and a reduction of congestion on the roads.

The paper states that the National Cycle Network has saved the national a total of 30 million car trips annually, which equates to 30m kilograms of carbon monoxide saved every year.¹⁹

Health & Social

The provision of a cycle route that is suitable for all levels of cyclist increases recreation by encouraging people to get out and try cycling or resurrect their old bike from the garage. This route could provide a platform on which cyclists, walkers, runners, families and disabled users can enjoy the countryside safely avoiding the main road.

In the 20 years since Sustrans launched the National Cycle Network, £6bn has been saved for the health system by helping to reduce the negative impacts of obesity.

Some excerpts from the Cycling UK review May 2015 highlight the health benefits of cycling:

- *People who cycle regularly in mid-adulthood typically enjoy a level of fitness equivalent to someone 10 years younger and their life expectancy is two years above the average.*

¹⁸ European Bicycle Industry and Market Profile 2013 (Coliped/Colibi)

¹⁹ Sustrans cycling charity website

- *The health benefits of cycling outweigh the injury risks by between 13:1 and 415:1, according to various studies. The figure that is most often quoted is 20:1 (life-years gained due to the benefits of cycling v the life-years lost through injuries).*
- *How many calories you use up whilst cycling depends on your weight, height, age and how fast you ride etc., but (very) generally speaking, cycling burns around 5 calories a minute.*
- *In England, physical inactivity causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths amongst people aged 40-79 per year.*
- *Without action, 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children will be obese by 2050 in the UK – and cost the NHS £10 billion p.a.*

Routes like this have been proven to reduce road usage, improve social cohesion (joining communities), increase childhood fitness and lower obesity, increase cycling club memberships, promote local school cycling and fitness projects.²⁰

These types of routes are the outdoor gym that most would rather visit, to develop skills and fitness in a safe and natural environment.

Economic Benefits

Occasional, regular and frequent cyclists contributed a 'gross cycling product' of c£3bn to the British economy in 2010.

- In 2010, around 23,000 people were employed directly in bicycle sales, distribution and the maintenance of cycling infrastructure in the UK. They generated £500m in wages and £100m in taxes.²¹

As cycle route users will use local businesses, there is greater likelihood that the money they spend will stay in the local economy. The trail will deliver clear benefit to all businesses and amenities along the length of the route and beyond.

Research conducted by Transport for London has revealed that although cyclists and pedestrians spend less per visit than car users, they visit more often and therefore tend to spend more per week.²²

The average figures in this report suggested that Cyclists spend £21 on average each visit into a town centre area, with Walkers spending £26.

- The National Trust property at Llanerchaeron will most likely enjoy increased visitor numbers. With visitors spending on entrance fees, purchasing items from their shop or just stopping for a coffee and cake in the cycle-friendly cafe.
- Also based at Llanerchaeron is 'Pure Ride Cycle Hire' who have a fleet of 20+ adults and children's bikes, as well as tag-along bikes and trailers for the smaller children. Pure Ride currently serve tourists and locals at peak times wishing to cycle into Aberaeron along the old railway line. They also service the local Mountain bike trail centres at Brechfa forest Carmarthenshire, and Nant yr Arian nr Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. This new route would increase traffic through the hire shop, helping to

²⁰ Sustrans Review 2014

²¹ Cycling UK Review May 2015

²² Town centre study 2011 (10062) - Transport for London

secure the future of this small business and allowing them to expand, even creating potential jobs for the busy school holidays.

- Businesses in Aberaeron such as shops, pubs, restaurants, other local tourist attractions and accommodation providers will all benefit from the additional visitors.
- The closest bike shop serving this new route is Cyclemart in the adjoining village of Cilcennin. This bike shop opened in 1989 and has recently branched into the electric assisted bikes market, encouraging those who previously were unable to ride bikes and to allow those with limited fitness to explore further into the beautiful local countryside. The local interest generated by the new trails could lead to increased bike sales. They will also see custom from visiting cyclists looking for spare parts or upgrades of parts.

In a Cycling England report the results from the Valuing the Benefits of Cycling study²³ were used to calculate the return on investment on a scheme. A headline conclusion was that, as a rule of thumb every £10,000 invested would need to generate at least one extra cyclist, each year, over a 30 year period in order to break even. For each £1 invested, the value of decreased mortality is £2.59. Including other benefits such as absenteeism, congestion and pollution would be likely to increase this value.²⁴

Tourism

Ceredigion welcomes over 2.6 million visitors annually for holidays, short breaks and to visit friends and family.²⁵ Tourism contributes around £298 million annually to the Ceredigion economy and supports over 4,500 full-time equivalent jobs.²⁶ A third of visitors say they plan on taking part in outdoor activities, including 43% of UK staying visitors.²⁷ These figures show a very positive tourism experience. Implementing a new cycle route is an additional incentive for people to visit the area and will attract new types of visitor.

Broadening the breadth of visitor through cycle tourism improves the tourism statistics overall. The area may appeal to organised cycle holiday operators, independent tourers, schools/youth groups and cycle clubs. The figures work both ways, an occasional cyclist may discover a passion of cycling whilst on holiday and join a local bike club having returned home.

In considering the existing infrastructure along the cycle route, there are many mutual benefits between business, economy and tourism. Visiting cyclists can help to support rural businesses such as cafes, village shops or post offices and pubs as well as generating greater trade. Those facilities or services that a visiting cyclist will expect, already exist and form part of the appeal for the area. En route, this includes the attraction of Llanerchaeron, Conti's cafe and Pure Ride Cycle Hire. At the end of the route or 'half-way', Aberaeron is an extremely popular tourist destination with all the services and attractions that have helped gain its reputation.

The National Trust Llanerchaeron site attracted 43,030 visitors in 2014²⁸ and boasting a cycle route on-site adds a dynamic advantage. An extended route would offer extra appeal

²³ Cycling England (2007), Valuing the benefits of Cycling

²⁴ Cycling England (2008), Planning for Cycling

²⁵ STEAM - Ceredigion report 2013

²⁶ STEAM - Ceredigion report 2013

²⁷ Wales Visitor Survey 2013

²⁸ Figures from Llanerchaeron office - Gwen Morgan (July 2016)

to National Trust visitors but would also attract a different kind of user looking for a family 'adventure' activity, thus competing with other activity sites and providers.

Leisure and tourist visitors can be measured as having different spending and transport patterns: tourists will normally spend more, and may require special facilities such as directions, transport and parking. Leisure users may cycle from home or drive a short distance to begin their ride. The existing car park at Llanerchaeron may suffice with agreement with National Trust but the car parking in Ciliau Aeron, the potential beginning of the route, ought to be discussed to ensure the village doesn't miss the spending potential of cycling tourists.

This is a huge potential market of 870,000 visitors who plan on taking part in outdoor activities. There are very few accurate figures on cycling, but an approximation of 3% of Domestic holiday makers will cycle at least once²⁹. If we assume that figure; 78,000 visitors to Ceredigion will cycle at least once during their stay. A new/improved track could bring a real boost to the area's local economy.

- Visitors wishing to use the new Cycle Trail could broadly fall into two main groups; those staying in the area and those travelling on a day trip. In this sense, the 'regulars' will make up the consistent majority, travelling from within Wales and the English borders.
- The new route will appeal most likely to families with small children who wish to use this facility as an affordable and fun activity to get their kids out into nature.
- It will also influence the destination choice of cycling holidays (whether families, clubs or groups), providing a safe, traffic-free route.

5. Target Audience

The users of the cycle route will fall into one of several categories:

1. Commuter/school run
2. Leisure visits made by local residents
3. Tourist visits made by people away from their usual locality

Traffic-free cycling is a particularly popular type of activity with families and inexperienced cyclists. For families, the main consideration for an activity is cost and recreational factor i.e. fun. A cycle route can tick all the boxes.

In 2011, in England and Wales, cycling to work was most common among 30-34 year-olds - 3.5% of workers in this age group cycle-commuted. Up to 60 years of age, the rate of cycling to work was above 2% for all age groups.³⁰

On average, in England (2014):

- Each person made 18 trips by cycle during the year (all age groups) and cycled 58 miles.
- Each person made 921 trips by 'all modes' (i.e. car, public transport, walking etc.), which means that cycling accounted for just under 2% of all trips.
- Car/van drivers made 384 car trips and drove 3,276 miles.
- The average length of a cycle trip was 3.1 miles, while the average length of a car trip was 8.5 miles³¹

The Active People Survey, based on a much larger sample of the population, suggests that, of people aged 16+ in England:

- 3% cycle five times a week (about 1.3 million people of 16+)
- 9% cycle at least once a week (about 4 million people of 16+)
- 15% cycle at least once per month (about 6.6 million people of 16+)³²

The National Travel Survey 2014 (NTS 0313) suggests that, of the population aged 5+ in England: About 8% cycles three or more times a week (if applied to the whole of Great Britain, this equates to around 4.7 million people of 5+).³³

30 Census 2011 - ONS census analysis/cycling to work

31 National Travel Survey 2014

32 Active People Survey 2015 - APS9

33 National Travel Survey 2014

6. Legal advice

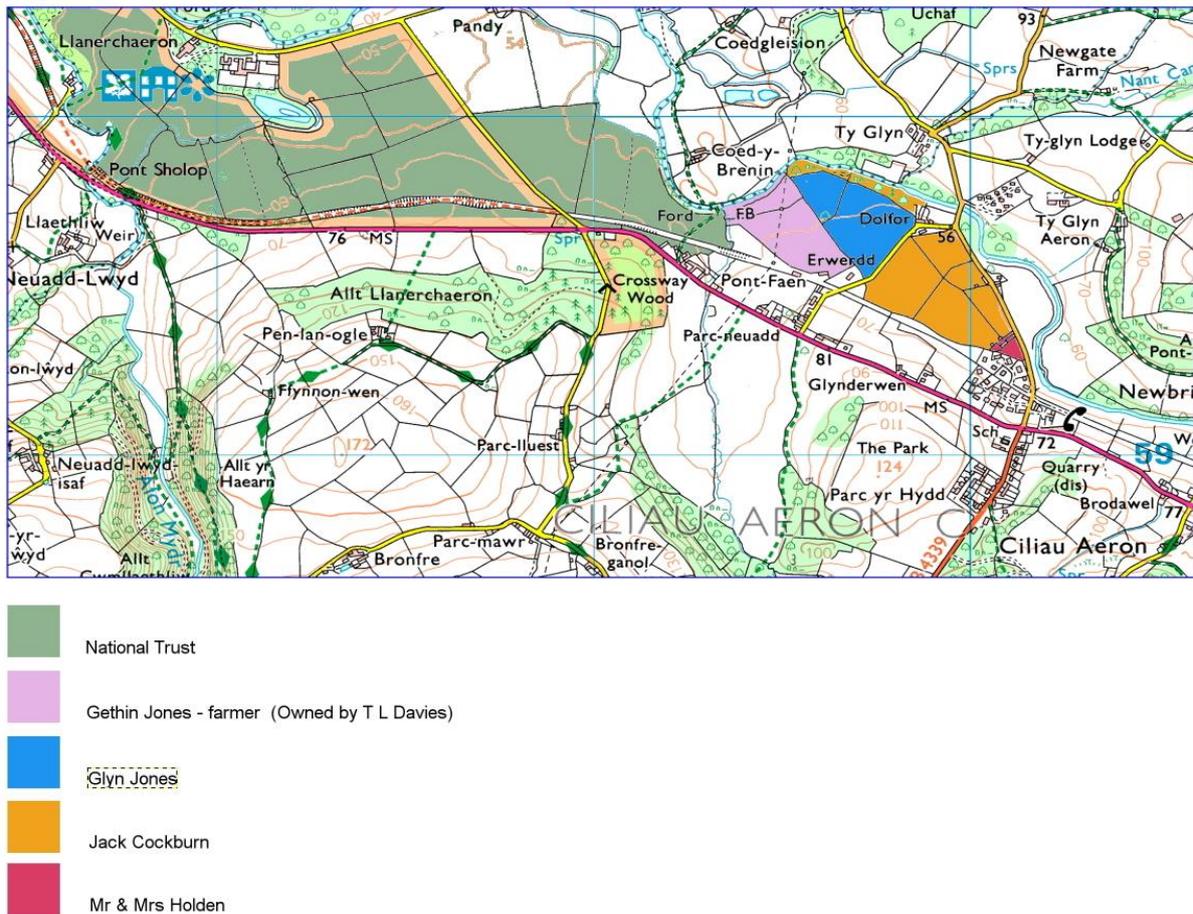


Fig. 7 - Land ownership on Proposed Route

Fig.7 details the land which the proposed cycle track crosses and the ownership information. All of the owners were contacted by the action group; a legal agreement was signed by each of them to allow access onto their land for the route to be surveyed.³⁴

Sustrans cycle charity's ideology and methods have become the industry standard for the creation of traffic-free routes across the UK. They have worked with the UK Government and alone to produce a selection of consultation documents on everything from track construction to the legalities of trail creation. (See Section 8 for links to construction standards)

All information provided is used under permission from Sustrans Wales. These are to be used as advisory documents only and external advice must be obtained by an expert in each field.

See link for their publication - Land, Legal and Planning draft 2014
http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/Route-Design-Resources/14_Land_Legal_and_Planning_09_12_14.pdf

³⁴ Appendix 1

West Wales Trails sought legal advice from - James Jones Son & Francis Solicitors in Llandysul. This was to verify the information from Sustrans was locally suitable and to provide a document with options for the landowners and the local action group to start land discussions.³⁵

Solicitors are legally not allowed to work for the interests of two separate parties so this is intended to inform only and landowners should seek their own legal advice before the point of negotiation.

³⁵ Appendix 2

7. Public and business consultation

All of the following are stakeholders who have been involved in meetings, consulted with or spoken to informally regarding the Dyffryn Aeron cycle track.

Local Interest

Jack Cockburn	A local landowner and tourism business owner, (he owns over 40% of the land the track travels through) with young children of his own and is one of the local action groups founding members.
Ray Giles	Ray has grown up children who have moved away and is one of the founding members of the group, his uncle owns part of the land (Glyn Jones) that the proposed route travels through. He is also one of the founding members of the local action group.
Gyles Morris	Gyles is a local tourism business owner of Naturesbase holidays in Cilcennin. He was one of the founding members of the local action group and believes it would be of tourism benefit to the local community.
John Emrys Jones	A local councillor whose property borders the proposed route (Dolfor, Ciliau Aeron). He has several grandchildren who visit regularly and will benefit directly from the project. He has voiced his firm support for the project, as it will provide safe cycling and fun activity for the local school children.
Elaine Moore	The head teacher of Ysgol Ciliau Parc school was consulted in the early stages of the project and sent a letter of support to the local action group. ³⁶

Professional Interest

Simon Frith	Owner of Pure Ride Cycle Hire, based at Llanerchaeron in the summer season for the last three years, he consulted on the cycle track route and his customer feedback from his current customer base. He also assisted with his wealth of local information and contacts.
Paul Boland	(National Trust - General Manager Mid&SE Wales Coast&Countryside) Based at Llanerchaeron, Paul confirmed the immediacy of the Llanerchaeron cycle extension route along the old railway. He also confirmed the co-operation of the National Trust to work towards an agreement for the NT owned section of the Dyffryn Aeron Cycle Track.

³⁶ Appendix 3

Alison Kinsey	Rural Communities Officer, Cynnal y Cardi, (Ceredigion County Council) - Alison advised the community action group and helped to secure funding through Cynnal y Cardi for the Feasibility Study.
Gareth Rowlands	Project development manager at Ceredigion County Council. He is very experienced in the procurement of funding for community projects and has offered his advice and services to aid in the realisation of the project.
Gwyn Smith	Area manager for South Wales, Sustrans Cardiff. Spoke with in June 2016. Gwyn sent through all info (PDF's) on Land and legal advice, Construction specs of traffic free cycle routes. See links in Section 6 & Section 8.
Ryland Jones	<p>Head of built environment, Sustrans Cymru. Corresponded with in July 2016. Ryland stated in his latest email that:</p> <p><i>"It looks like the section being developed as part of your project could be a viable extension for 822, though we would look to develop it back to Lampeter ideally so it becomes part of the strategic network and links to 82. However, I'll need to check with Ceredigion County Council on whether there is a realistic prospect of getting this funded via a future bid from them. You mentioned a school link, which could open up some other funding options.".....</i></p> <p><i>".....In the short term I think securing agreement for access to the land for the Ciliau Aeron project and funding that would be a welcome move towards enhancing the amenity in the area."</i></p> <p><i>"..... I would say it is reasonable to recommend future integration with 822 and the wider NCN, but this will need further feasibility to determine how viable it is to deliver."</i></p>
Stephen Jones	Sports Development Officer for Ceredigion - Spoke with in June 2016, regarding Sports Wales development grants and support from his department for the project. Stephen was very positive but felt that the grant would probably not be applicable as they require it to be a training facility that could lead to competitive events.
Shaun Harris	Traffic Management & Strategy assistant for Ceredigion County Council - Spoke with in July. Shaun discussed county applicable regulations for cyclist warning signs, approximate cost of installation. Ceredigion County Council have a budget for signage and this would have to be assessed on an individual basis to decide whether these could be provided by the Council. Otherwise the signs can be authorised through his department. They will specify where these are needed and they will come at an approximate cost of £200-£300 per sign. Shaun also shared specifications of sign locations; these may change slightly during the planning phase.

Geraint Blayney

Development Planning Advisor - Natural Resources Wales.
A Pre-planning application would be needed to decide on the permissions needed for the woodland section of the trail & potential bridge crossings. The Flooding & conservation team will make a decision on the need and content of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Deryck Fell

Director of Consolid UK - Spoke with Deryck in July 2016 and exchanged e-mails regarding their Soil Stabilization products and costs. These are viable, Sustrans recommended and tested Tarmac alternative. A quote would be needed to ascertain exact costs.

8. Design, Planning & Construction

Design

The designs provided are approximate and will need to be revisited pre construction phase and after the ecological survey, to confirm distances from hedgerows, boardwalk positioning, point of stream crossings etc. The design of the woodland section is theoretical at best and once the avoidance areas have been ascertained, the most worthwhile route can be determined. The ideal would be to provide an undulating trail which weaves in and out of the trees providing a fun and visually stimulating route. This sort of trail design will be a great pull for the tourist market and will provide an exciting route which locals will want to ride again and again.

The new cycle route should be designed and constructed adhering carefully to the standards set by the latest Sustrans and industry standards. This will ensure that the trail would be considered for inclusion in the National Cycle Network (NCN). This would then be included on the Sustrans website and literature, thus promoting the cycle route to a large audience, including the cycle touring and leisure cycling tourists. Many cycling websites, forums and magazines also use the Sustrans literature to update their own information.

Comprehensively revised and updated in 2015, LCDS sets out requirements and advice for cycle network planning and for the design of dedicated cycle infrastructure, cycle-friendly streets and cycle parking. This, and the Sustrans technical guidelines have become the industry Standard for cycle infrastructure projects.

The following link is to the relevant section within the "LCDS design manual" (London Cycling Design Standards)

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lcds-chapter4-cyclelanesandtracks.pdf>

The following link is to Sustrans' "National Cycle Network - Guidelines and Practical Details issue 2"

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/infrastructure/route-design-resources/technical-guidelines>

This sets out the design philosophy and criteria for the Sustrans National Cycle Network but is equally suitable for cycling infrastructure of all sorts at a regional or a local level.



Route 822 was originally intended to go from Aberaeron to meet the "82" at Lampeter. The first section to Llanerchaeron is completed, but a feasibility study was never carried out for the rest of the route. Sustrans have agreed that the proposed route "*could be a viable extension for 822*"

The completed route, if built to appropriate standards, would be shown on this map as an extension of the 822.

Fig.8 - NCN Route map of Wales - Sustrans.org.uk

Fig 9. shows the **original proposed route** drawn up by the community action group. If/when the National Trust agree to extend the existing route 822 through their land, this will necessitate a 400m section along a minor road to connect the existing with the new route.

Looking at figure 9 still and the original proposed route, the only amendment made by West Wales Trails is shown at point 3. The Proposed Cycle route crosses the access track at Maes y Felin rather than passing the house. The landowner permission for Maes y Felin should therefore be much easier to obtain and provides justifiable reasoning for this change of route.

After working through the potential of several other routes, the route in Fig.10 was drawn up by West Wales Trails as a viable alternative. This route would connect with the dismantled railway shown on the map. The current route on the 822 utilises the railway so it would make sense to connect directly to this.

A full set of maps have been produced by West Wales Trails to show in detail the potential routes and alternative sections, a full complement of detailed vignettes have also been produced with further annotated detail.³⁷

³⁷ See appendix 4 - 9

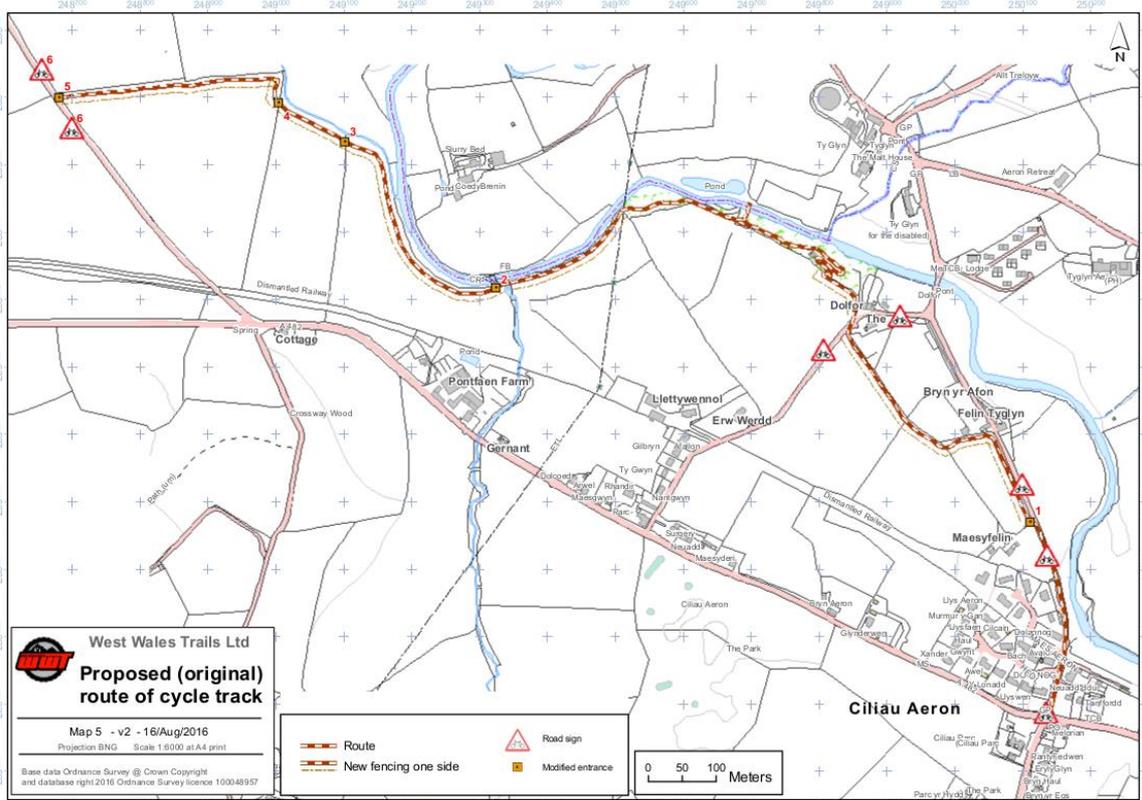


Fig. 9 - Original proposed route of cycle route (see appendix 4 - 9 for more detail)

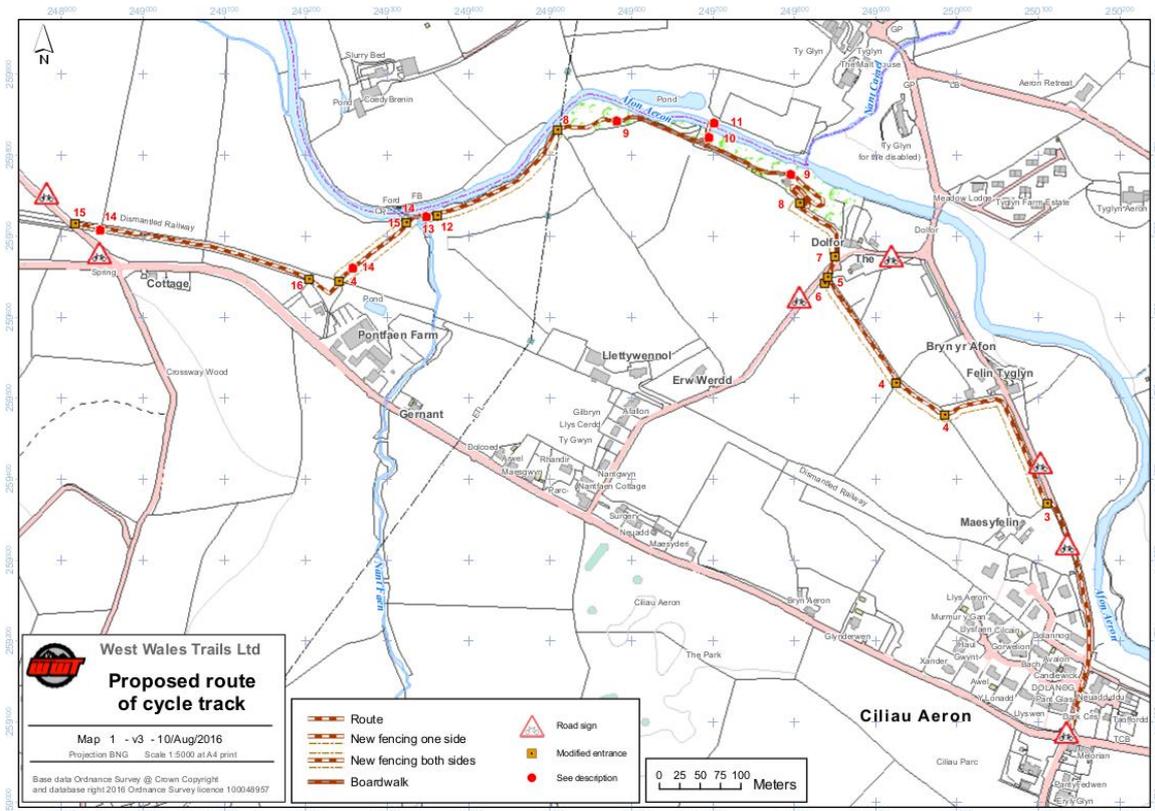


Fig. 10 - Proposed route of cycle track utilising dismantled railway and current footpath.

The community action group initial concerns regarding the route proposed by West Wales Trails, could be addressed as follows:

1. 'Agricultural vehicles swing into the lane below point 15 (fig 10) at high speeds'

The speeds of vehicles can be controlled with several methods, from simple signage through to new speed limits, or road textures. At planning stage, this can be discussed in more detail with Ceredigion County Council highways department to determine which method would be the most appropriate, and whether the project would be eligible for funding for one or more of these.

2. 'The latter part of the route would be shorter and arguably less interesting'

The dismantled railway is interesting and scenic in its own right, and with some hedge maintenance would provide a raised vista over the Aeron basin. The cost of the trail on the existing railway bed is significantly less as it would be suitable for an unsurfaced self-binding aggregate trail.

In addition, West Wales Trails feel that by ending this section of the trail on the dismantled railway, it will apply leverage to the National Trust at Llanerchaeron to continue the route along their section of railway.

Planning

Informal planning advice has been sought from Ceredigion County Council planning department, but formal pre-planning advice should be sought before an application is made to ensure that the planning process goes as smoothly as possible.

The assumption is that full planning would need to be sought for this project at a cost of £190 per 0.1 hectare. This will come in at a cost of between £950 - £1200; depending on route selection.

Ecological Survey / Environmental Impact Assessment

Due to part of the route traversing a mature woodland and river bank, it will require in-depth ecological assessment to determine the effects of the project on the natural environment. An ecological survey is needed for any planning application (for construction project), but due to the sensitive nature of this route, further advice will need to be sought (from NRW and Ceredigion County Council planning authority).

The Aeron river is considered as a main river in the NRW definitions meaning that it is subject to stringent regulations for any construction projects:

"If it is a "Main River", permission will be needed under the Water Resources Act for work within the channel (e.g. a bridge, pier). Permission under the Bylaws that are appended to this Act is required if the works are within the floodplain (e.g. a path adjacent to the river) or

within a certain distance of the river bank. (This distance varies across the regions of the UK.)"³⁸

Geraint Blayney - Development Planning Advisor for NRW suggested that:

"An NRW pre-planning application would be needed to decide on the permissions needed for the woodland section of the trail & potential bridge crossings. The flooding & conservation team will make a decision on the need and content of an Environmental Impact Assessment."

Construction

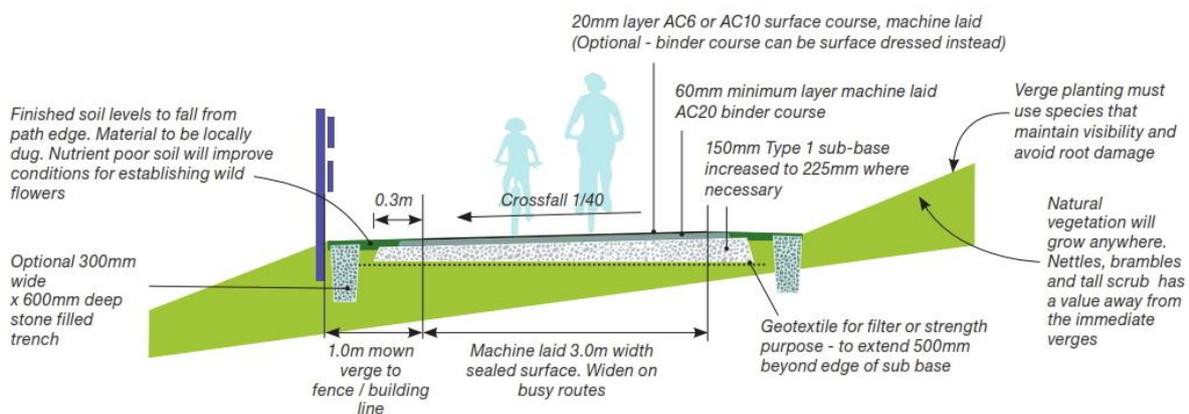


Fig.11 Surfaced track construction schematics (image taken with permission from Sustrans Handbook for cycle-friendly design, April 2014)

Fig.11 is the industry standard cycle track construction method. It shows a standard tray construction method with a Type 1 (40mm to dust) Sub base. This will then have a binder layer of Tarmac. It also specifies the use of an optional "French drain".

For the purpose of the design, West Wales Trails has specified a "French drain" either side to allow for the worst case scenario. The necessity for this will have to be ascertained once the field areas have been assessed at their full saturation. The assumption on the gradient, current vegetation and from local knowledge is that in most cases only one ditch will be required. The pricing is based on a requirement for two ditches and should be included until an assessment has been made at full saturation in Autumn/Winter 2016.

The local action group have stated that they wish to avoid tarmac if possible and use a surface similar to the current route 822 (limestone 20mm to dust). Sustrans explains the problems with an un-sealed surface very succinctly:

".....there are overriding disadvantages to unbound surfaces which should preclude their use except as a measure of last resort. These disadvantages are."³⁹

³⁸ Sustrans.org.uk - Technical Note 14 - Flooding - Sept 2011

³⁹ Sustrans.org.uk - Traffic Free Routes : Detailed design - Dec 2014

- *ride quality is poorer on unbound surfaces than sealed surfaces, particularly in wet weather. Skid resistance is reduced which increases sight stopping distance. The surfaces are dusty in dry weather and generate a mud spray when wet.*
- *limestone, self-binding gravels and re-cycled materials are prone to erosion by general use, rainwater, horse traffic and motorcycles. Erosion is particularly common on gradients. Levels of maintenance required are greater which will require more frequent access by contractors' vehicles and temporary path closure.*
- *whole-life costs are greater than for a comparable sealed surface path*
- *paths built originally in limestone dust have required re-construction with a bitumen surface. This reduces funding available to develop new sections of network"*

Several alternatives that have been trialled by Sustrans in conjunction with local authorities include 'Toptrek', 'Finepath', 'Cedec' and 'Consolid'.

Toptrek - superceded by Ultitrek is a product produced by Tarmac UK. Essentially, it is recycled road planings crushed and graded to 20mm down. This is a more environmentally friendly option than tarmac but still provides the same 'feel'.

Finepath - was developed by Tarmac in association with British Waterways as an alternative material to 'black ash' surfacing and is used extensively on the canal network in the West Midlands. This product is not currently supplied in Ceredigion.

Cedec - is a non-binding footpath gravel developed for botanic gardens and urban parks. It presents the same ongoing maintenance issues as a standard 6mm down aggregate surface. This product would not be suitable for this type of track.

Consolid - An economically viable, environmentally friendly and industry proven alternative to Tarmac for cycle routes is the "Consolid" soil stabilisation product. This product works by incorporating an acrylic polymer with the soil on site and compacting. It "activates the cohesive forces of the soil and substantially and lastingly reduces the influence of water".⁴⁰ This has been used on several cycle routes across the UK with great success. This product is available nationwide and would provide the sort of natural look, feel, competitive price, environmental credentials and durability the action group require.

The Consolid construction method is still based on the 'standard tray method' as shown in fig.11. Instead of removing materials and replacing with a bought in aggregate then Tarmac binder course, the 'Tray' is excavated to the same depth and the Consolid additives are combined with the removed material. The removed materials are then thoroughly mixed in the tray with a power rotovator and compacted to form a hard wearing, water-resistant surface.

The advantages of soil stabilisation products over traditional construction methods are:

1. No materials have to be removed from or brought to site.
2. Consolid claims approx 40%-50% saving on costs.
3. Preserves the natural look of the trail.
4. Environmentally friendly.

⁴⁰ Consolid.co.uk

Boardwalk

It is very difficult to specify exact construction methods for the boardwalk sections until the results of an ecological survey. For example:

- Whether piling would be appropriate due to badger sets, or whether concrete pads or other load spreaders would be required. All of this can be discussed after an EIA and ecological survey have been produced.
- The support structure restrictions would directly affect the types and size of beams, method of railing fixation and framework construction.
- Types of wood preservative permitted for an environmentally sensitive area such as this.

The link that follows is a guide produced for Carmarthenshire Disabled Association to provide a guide to current construction standards for shared use disabled, pedestrian & cycling boardwalks. This is the most up-to-date industry standard document available for this type of construction.

<http://carmarthenshire-disabled-access-group.org.uk/Dave%20Crofts%20Countryside%20Guides/Boardwalk%20Maintenance%20and%20Construction-r1a.pdf>

9. Estimated costs & Funding

Estimated Costs

Based on the design specification, an approximate bill of quantities was raised from Quantitative Surveyor - Gary Jenkins, Llandysul.⁴¹

West Wales Trails assumed worst case in all sections further to an ecological survey and potential EIA, local expertise and planning dialogue.

Although the local action group have specified that tarmac would not be appropriate for the route, any funding they pursue will take industry specifications from Sustrans and will expect a finished and low maintenance surface. As such we have provided two sets of pricing for comparison, a tarmac finished track (excepting Railway section for which a self binding aggregate surface has been priced) and a 'Consolid' built track (again excepting railway section).

The Routes priced by the QS are as follows:

- Route A - Original proposed route (inc route from Ciliau Aeron to Dolfor Cottages)
- Route B - New Proposed route (inc route from Ciliau Aeron to Dolfor Cottages)
- Route C - Route from Ciliau Aeron to Dolfor cottages

This was split as such to provide comparative approximate bills of quantities for the grant application process. In order to compare costs of the 'second half' of Route A & B (from Dolfor cottages onwards), the cost of Route C may be subtracted from these.

Savings

Throughout the route there are several sections where savings can be made. The woodland boardwalk section at a cost of £418.20 per metre is a large expense, but without it the trail would lose a lot of its appeal to both local users and tourists. The distance is a worst case scenario and is likely to be reduced dramatically pending an ecological survey.

Ryland Jones of Sustrans suggested that they have been removing wooden chicanes and barriers on trails as they do more harm than good - difficulties arise with disabled users, tag-a-long & trailer bikes, tandems & recumbent bikes. Their policy now is to put no barriers in at all, just a 1.5m gap at a road entrance and to make sure there is appropriate signage on the trail to signify a road junction or crossing. If a problem arises with abuse of the trail then this can be reviewed, often simply to incorporate a set of staggered bollards. The chicanes have been included in the QS report as they are still the industry standard and would have to be discussed with Ceredigion County Council planning.

⁴¹ See attached files: [Meter rate Revised Mountain Bike track schedule - 13-09-16.xls](#) & [Meter rate Rev. Mountain Bike track schedule \(CONSOLID SYSTEM\)- 13-09-16](#)

Funding

As quoted by Sustrans:

"Sources of funds for Greenways are as varied as the schemes themselves. Literally every project is funded in different ways and almost all from a package of different parts. Whilst this is not particularly satisfactory, it does seem to be the British way of doing things!"

Common sources of funds are:

- Local authority transport budgets
- Local authority leisure, parks and countryside funds
- Developer contributions through section 106 agreements
- Development agency funding which may include European funding
- Landfill and aggregate tax sources
- Lottery funding⁴²

National Trust own part of the land the proposed route will pass through. As such, there should be dialogue with them to decide how they can contribute either financially or with labour towards the implementation of this section. This would be mutually beneficial.

There is now a culture of CSR (corporate social responsibility). Big businesses are expected to contribute back to the local community. In the USA and Canada local and big businesses provide funding for most of their cycle trail projects. This is a revenue stream which is largely under-utilised in the UK, but could work very well for a project of this scale.

This could start with local businesses in Aberaeron and Ciliau Aeron, inviting them to a seminar to discuss how the project will help to improve the local community and build the tourism potential for the area. Each business could provide monetary, labour, machinery, advice or a needed product. Each business would have an honourable mention on the signage for the trail, this could become a benchmark for community funding in the UK.

- Timber mill to provide materials.
- Carpentry firms to provide labour for boardwalk and build the wooden cycling information boards.
- Signage company to provide the printed signs.
- Legal firm to provide advice and any tenancy/legal agreements.
- Haulage company to provide aggregate.
- Contractor to provide excavator and operator.
- Fencing contractors to provide labour.
- Farming supplies company to provide gates and posts.

Consumers are becoming increasingly wise to and intolerant of unethical business practices and organisations who act irresponsibly. Advances in social media (giving everyone a voice) means that negative or destructive practices quickly fuel conversations online. Organisations are accountable for their actions like never before.

*"88% of consumers said they were more likely to buy from a company that supports and engages in activities to improve society."*⁴³

⁴² Sustrans.org.uk

⁴³ Better Business Journey, UK Small Business Consortium

The NCVO charity works to connect social enterprises, charities and community projects with businesses who wish to be seen to be making a difference in the community. The following link is to their funding page where thousands of funding streams can be accessed. This would be a great funding potential as CSR is now expected from large companies, and is required by large commercial construction/infrastructure projects.

<http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx?ncvo-practical-support>

10. Appendices

1. Example of signed agreement for surveying of cycle route.

Dyffryn Aeron Cycle Path Llanerchaeron to Ciliau Aeron route

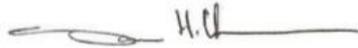
7th September 2015

To whom it may concern,

Re: Access to Survey land for routing the cycle path

Please take this letter as confirmation that I, the undersigned, am supportive of the project's aim of constructing a cycle path to connect Llanerchaeron to Ciliau Aeron. I consent to allowing a surveyor access to the land under my control for the purposes of drawing up the proposed route shown on Plan A attached.

Signed



Name

SAM HOLDEN

Position (owner/ manager)

OWNER, MAESYFELW, CILIAU AERON.

2. Document produced by James Jones Son & Francis Solicitors, Llandysul

James Jones Son & Francis

Solicitors

12 Lincoln Street, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 4BU

Tel: 01559 362224 Facsimile: 01559 362021 Email: info@jjsf.co.uk

The following is general information on the most commonly used agreements available to land owners when consenting to a cycle path that runs through land in their ownership.

Freehold

This means that the land is sold to the developers of the cycle path, transferring the ownership to the developers forever. A freehold can be subject to restrictive covenants and easements can be granted for adjoining properties if the land is landlocked.

Easements

An easement is a right over a landowner's land. This means that the landowner will grant a right of way for cyclists and walkers over the path. An easement can either be freehold i.e. forever, or it can be for a term of years (a leasehold easement).

Leases

A lease is a contract by which one party conveys land to another for a specified time, usually in return for a periodic payment.

A lease can provide that a freehold owner retains control over certain matters (these could be the maintenance of boundaries or vegetation or simply that the landowner doesn't like the idea of parting with the land forever).

The period of the lease ("the term") can be defined by agreement.

The lease can also provide for maintenance obligations on the tenant (developers), details on the termination of a lease, renewal of the lease and details of rent.

Licences

These are personal agreements between a landowner and the developer of the path, where the landowner agrees to allow cyclists and walkers to use the path.

The landowner can withdraw permission to use the path at any time on notice.

The licence is not binding on any subsequent buyer of the land.

All parties will need to take independent legal advice in relation to their position.

This document should not be construed as formal legal advice and all parties involved should also seek independent legal advice on their own position.



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VAT No: 415532546

Christopher Mason-Watts LL.M. Director · Nicola Mason-Watts Director & Licensed Conveyancer · Cerys Davies LL.Solicitor · Sarah Simmonds Practice Manager

3. Letter from Ciliau Parc School - Ciliau Aeron

Ysgol Ciliau Parc
Ciliau Aeron, Lampeter.
SA48 8BX

01570 470650

prif@ciliauparc.ceredigion.sch.uk

Re: Proposed extension to the cycle path from Llanerchaeron to Ciliau Aeron.

I would like to support whole heartedly the proposed extension to the cycle path from Llanerchaeron to Ciliau Aeron. This extension would be of enormous benefit to the whole community and especially to the young children of the area.

Nearly all of our pupils from age 4 to 11 have bicycles and enjoy cycling. A few of our pupils are members of a local cycling club and regularly take part in country wide cycling events and competitions. The school offers cycling proficiency lessons and 'Kerb Kraft' road safety awareness sessions. We take road safety and encouraging a healthy and active life style seriously. However, in Ciliau Aeron there are very few safe areas for children to cycle. The school is situated on a very busy main road and junction.

We use the cycle path from Llanerchaeron to Aberaeron during the school year. But we have to hire transport to take the children and their bicycles from Ciliau Aeron to Llanerchaeron as the main road to the beginning of this path is unsuitable and dangerous for the pupils to cycle on. If the cycle path was extended our pupils would be able to cycle safely directly to Aberaeron. I am certain that this would benefit their well being and would encourage a more healthy life style.

I asked our pupils what they thought about this proposal. All were enthusiastic and positive. Many were hoping for bicycles for Christmas. Here are some of their responses:

"It will be good for energy and being healthy."

"Great way to get to Aberaeron and Llanerchaeron without using the car."

Some people can't afford a bike carrier at the back of their car to get to the cycle path."

"It will help improve our cycling and fitness skills."

"Save the environment by not using a car."

"Give you a safe place to learn how to cycle."

"Lovely to walk with my dogs safely."

"Encourage children to go outside more."

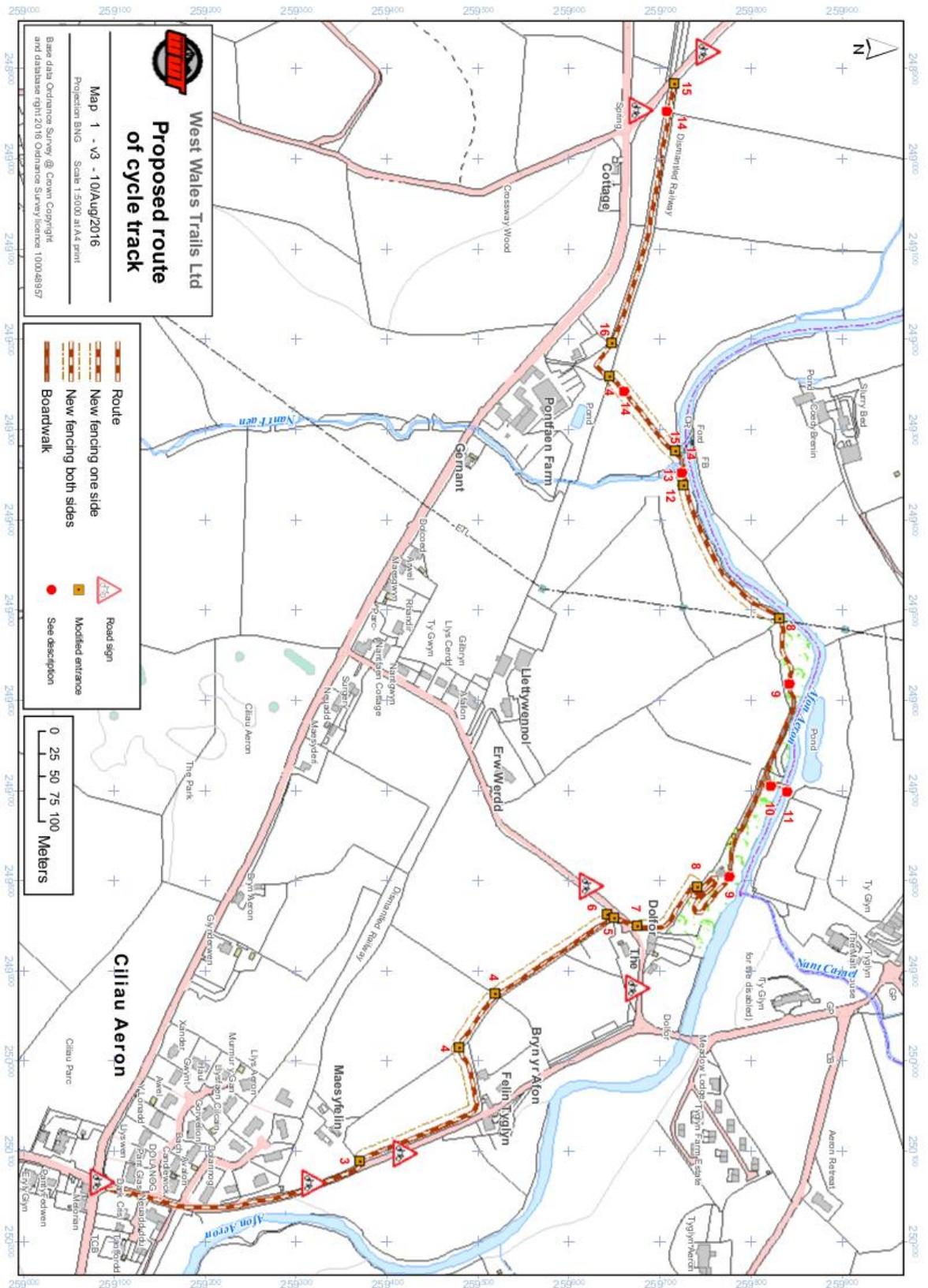
"I could cycle home from school."

I do hope that this proposal is successful. It is an investment for the future of the children of the area.

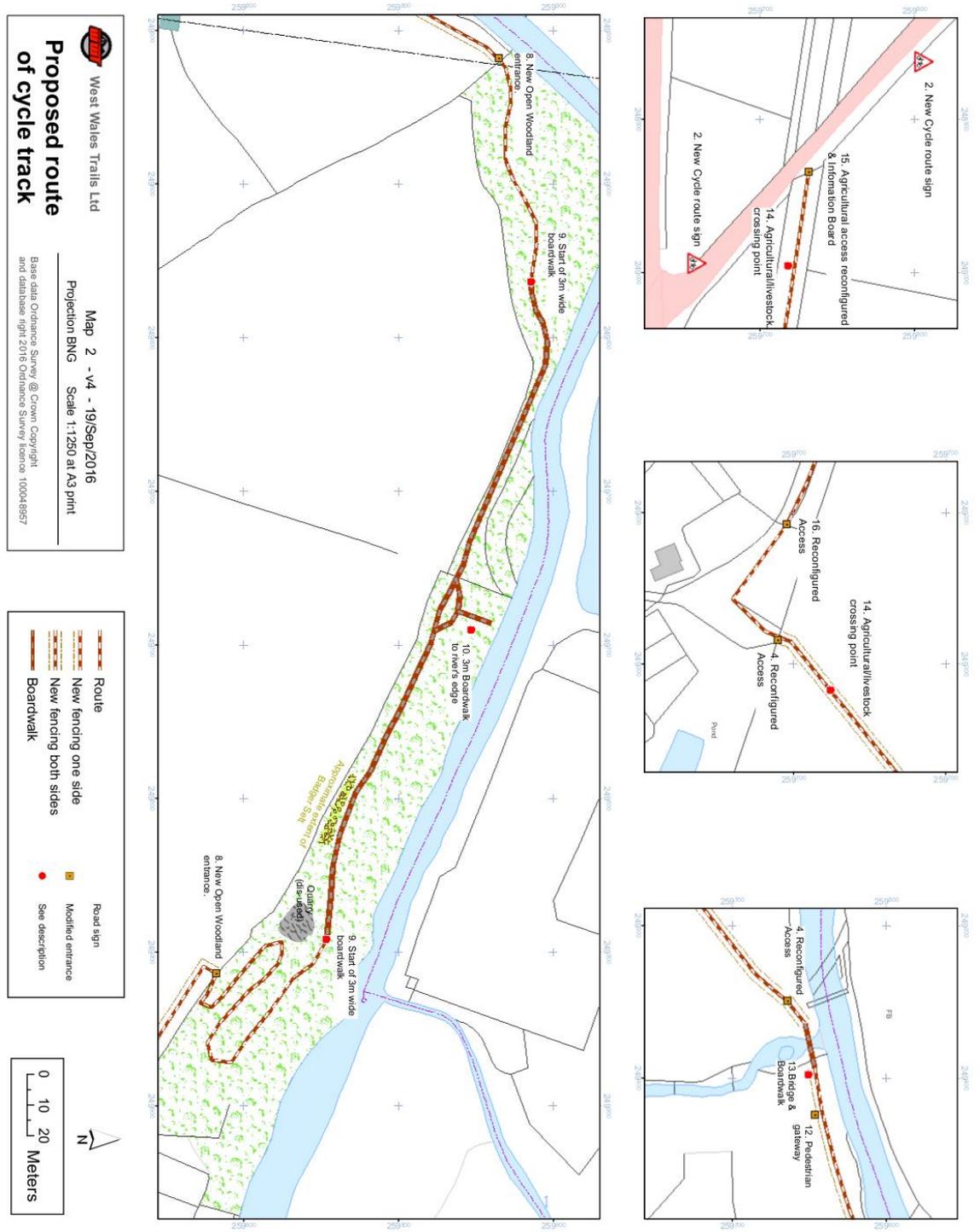
Your sincerely,

Elaine Moore

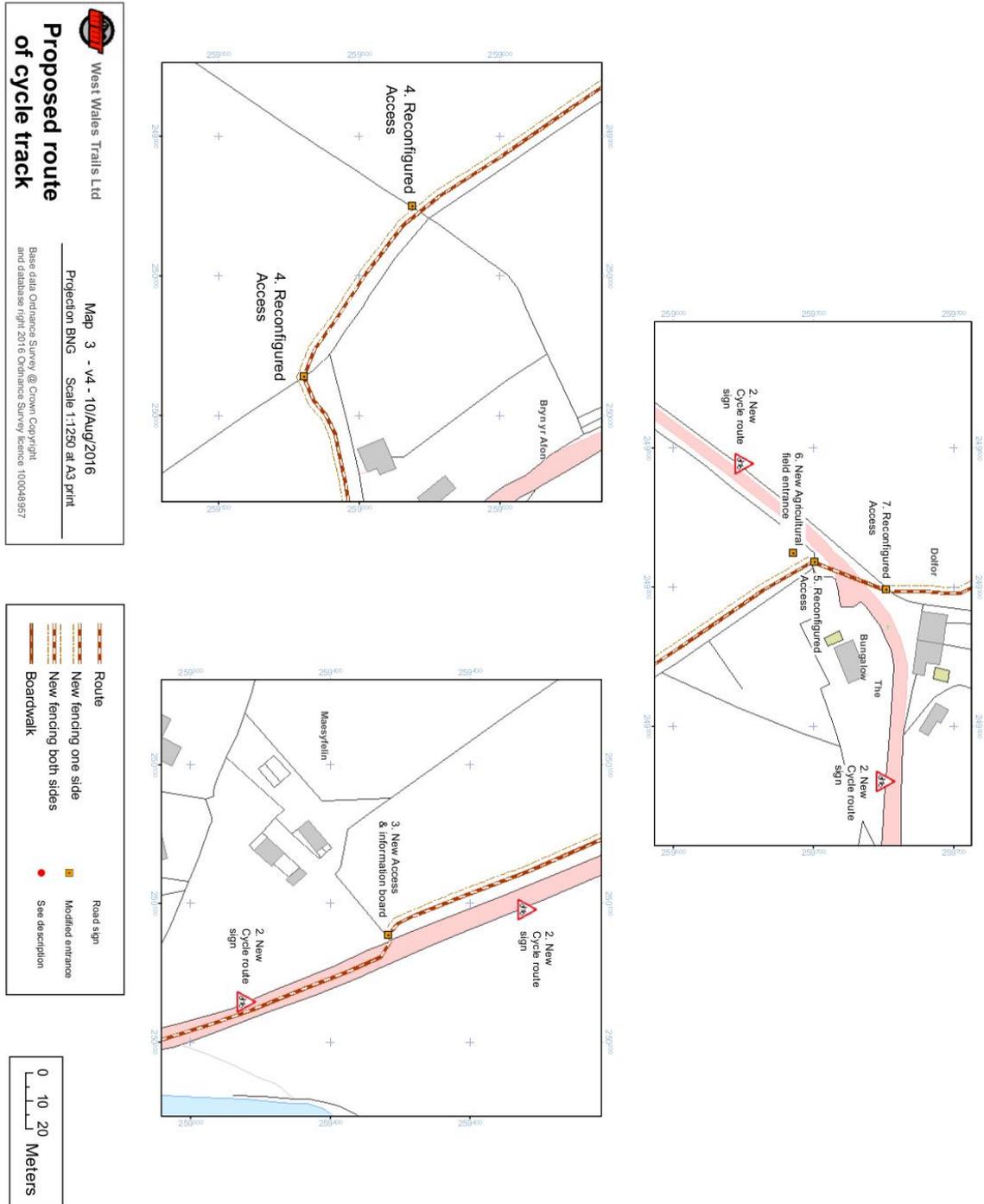
4. Proposed cycle route



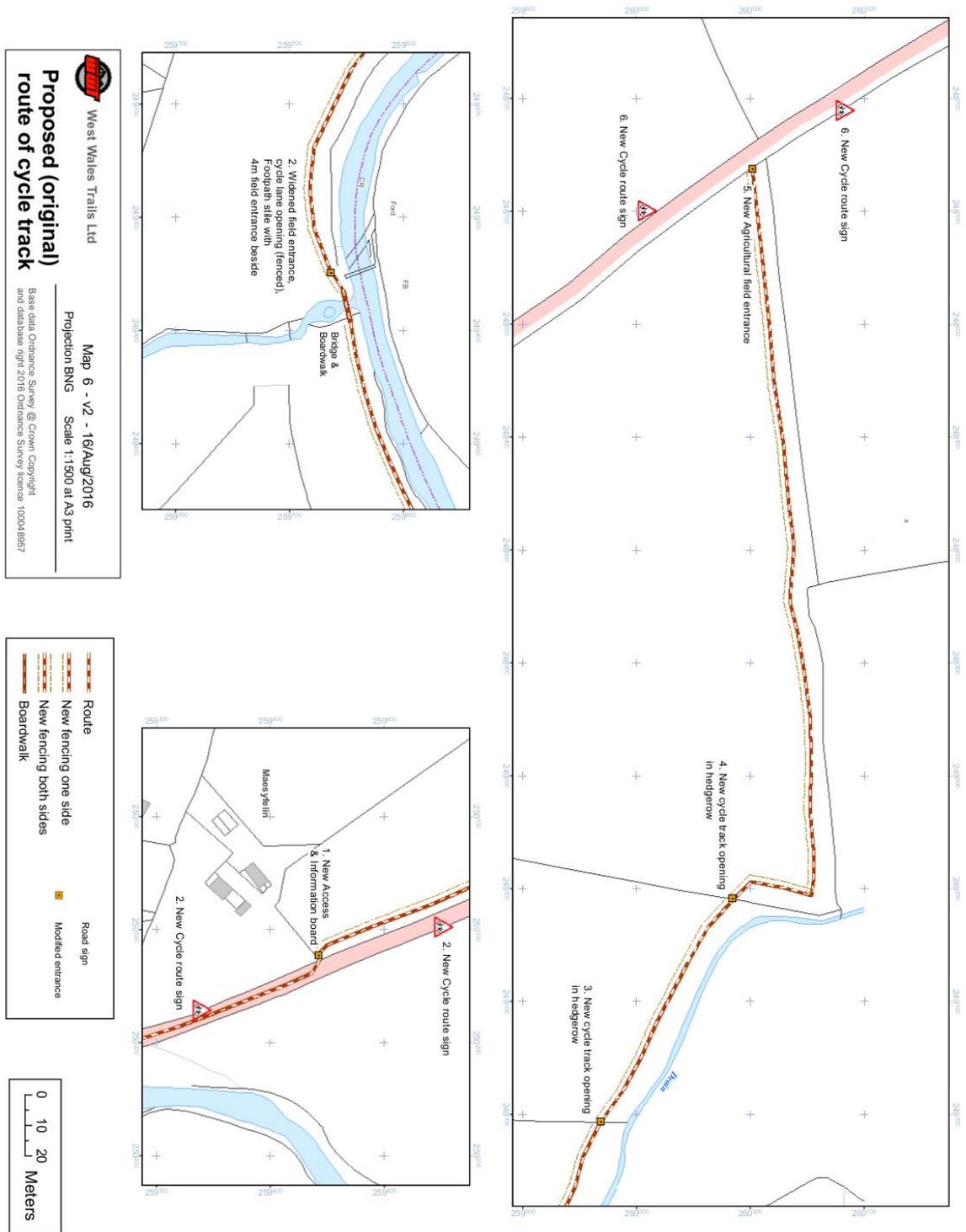
5. Proposed cycle route - Vignette a.



6. Proposed cycle route - Vignette b.



8. Original proposed cycle route - Vignette a.



9. Disused footbridge

